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The situation in the Middle East

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Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 8 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government and further to my previous letters on the same subject, I have the honour to inform you hereunder of a series of violations of Lebanon's sovereignty that were committed by Israel on land, at sea and in the air between 30 October and 30 November 2000.

30 October 2000

Between 1004 and 1034 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), thus violating Lebanese airspace.

31 October 2000

Between 0900 and 1826 hours Israeli warplanes violated Lebanese airspace on 16 occasions.

1 November 2000

Between 1125 and 1205 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew Nabatiyah at very high altitude.

Between 1400 and 1540 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South and the coastal area of the Shuf at very high altitudes.

2 November 2000

Between 0900 and 1140 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Shab`a farmlands area at very high altitude. Between 1110 and 1150 hours Israeli warplanes also overflew the South and the coastal area of the Shuf at very high altitudes.

At 1405 hours officers of the Lebanese liaison unit were with a verification party near the tomb of Shaykh Abbad when Israeli soldiers near Manarah went on alert and assumed firing positions. They maintained this status until the Lebanese officers had left the locality.

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Between 2015 and 2157 hours Israeli forces in position at Jabal al-Rus fired seven tracer rounds towards an outlying area of Shab`a town. Between 2145 and 2215 hours Israeli forces launched an illumination flare over Birkat al-Naqqar and directed several bursts of medium-weapons fire at areas around their outpost at Jabal al-Rus. At the same time an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Shab`a farmlands at very high altitude.

3 November 2000

Between 0700 and 0815 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Shab`a farmlands at very high altitude.

An Israeli bulldozer crossed the blue line to a depth of 20 metres inside Lebanese territory so as to be able to open a track around principal boundary pillar 18 at Yarun.

At 1120 hours a party of United Nations observers and UNIFIL personnel found four reinforced-concrete cuboid obstacles five metres inside Lebanese territory at principal boundary pillar 6, south of Alma al-Sha`b.

Between 1500 and 1510 hours Israeli forces at the Ruwaysat al-Alam outpost in the Shab`a farmlands directed a number of bursts of medium-weapons fire at areas around their position. This happened again at 1800 hours. The sound of an explosion was also heard coming from inside the occupied Shab`a farmlands.

Between 1820 and 2015 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Kafr Shuba area at very high altitude.

At 2315 hours an Israeli gunboat inside Israeli territorial waters off Ra's al-Naqurah directed a number of bursts of medium-weapons fire at fishing boats inside Lebanese territorial waters near the international boundary.

4 November 2000

Between 1100 and 1147 hours a party of United Nations observers saw two Israeli soldiers reconnoitring inside Lebanese territory 20 metres from the blue line north of Ghajar. After some time they left the area.

Between 1845 and 1905 hours personnel of the UNIFIL Irish contingent saw four Israeli helicopters flying at moderate altitude over the Ayn Ibl and Marun al-Ra's areas. A party of United Nations observers and personnel from the UNIFIL Irish contingent also set out to ascertain the removal of Israeli encroachments at intermediate boundary pillar 44, 2.5 kilometres south-west of Yarun (five concrete cuboid obstacles five metres inside Lebanese territory), at principal boundary pillars 16 and 17, south-east of Rumaysh (an excavator inside Lebanese territory close to the blue line) and at principal boundary pillar 19, south-east of Yarun (a trench 15 metres inside Lebanese territory). It found that the violations were still in effect.

5 November 2000

At 0530 hours an Israeli gunboat inside Israeli territorial waters off Ra's al-Naqurah directed a number of bursts of medium-machine-gun fire towards a Lebanese fishing boat as it was approaching the area. No one was hurt.

At 0620 hours Israeli enemy forces in positions in the Shab`a farmlands fired two 120-mm mortar rounds at the vicinity of their former Shahal outpost, now vacated, in an outlying area of Shab`a.

At 1100 hours Israeli forces at the Fatimah gate proceeded to fire a number of light-weapons rounds into the air over a gathering of some 100 persons opposite the gate. No one was hurt.

At 1120 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the Nabatiyah area at low altitudes.

6 November 2000

Between 0015 and 0041 hours five Israeli helicopters flew over the UNIFIL positions at Qana, Bayt Yahun, Kafr Dunin, Qallawiyah, Burj Qallawiyah and Tayyibah, thus violating Lebanese airspace.

At 0026 hours a position of the UNIFIL Finnish contingent north of Tayyibah reported that two helicopters had landed near Qantarah.

At 0030 hours Israeli helicopters overflew the Jwayya area at moderate altitudes.

Between 0030 and 0045 hours two Israeli helicopters overflew the towns of Frun, Ghanduriyah and Srifa in southern Lebanon before leaving in the direction of the occupied territories.

This bellicose development creates a grave precedent, inasmuch as it marks the first overflight of Lebanese territory by Israeli helicopters, as opposed to aerial violations by jet fighters, since the Israeli withdrawal. For some time, the enemy has also been strengthening its defences and deploying reinforcements forward along the boundaries. It has also recently been leaking to its information media the assessment that operations against its troops from Lebanese territory are to be expected. This new campaign can be explained as the enemy preparing to launch new military incursions on the pretext of defending its troops, which has been its practice in the past. It is to be feared that such penetration by helicopter will be a prelude to the implementation of full-scale operations reaching deep inside Lebanon.

Between 1020 and 1430 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South, the Western Bekaa, the North and Mount Lebanon at very high altitudes, breaking the sound barrier in the South and the Western Bekaa. They also carried out mock attacks, launching heat balloons in the Tyre area. They dropped an unknown object borne on a small balloon to the west of Qa`, and it was carried by the wind at moderate altitude towards the mountains east of Ra's Ba`labakk.

Between 1745 and 1835 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew Jwayya and Hasbayya at very high altitude.

7 November 2000

Between 0910 and 1300 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the Nabatiyah area, the Tibnin detachment sector and the Alma al-Sha`b area at moderate altitudes. They also overflew all parts of Lebanon at very high altitudes, breaking the sound barrier.

8 November 2000

Between 1000 and 1020 hours Israeli warplanes circled the Naqurah area at very high altitudes and then left in the direction of the occupied territories. At 1130 hours Israeli warplanes overflew an area in the Qulaylah detachment sector.

From 1220 hours Israeli warplanes circled the Sidon, Tyre and Naqurah areas at very high altitudes before leaving at 1520 hours.

9 November 2000

Between 1240 and 1315 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South at very high altitudes.

At 1600 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew an offshore area near Amshit at low altitude heading towards the Bekaa.

10 November 2000

At 0130 hours an Israeli gunboat intercepted the tugboat *Rizq Allah* (No. 276/T) with a crew of four Lebanese on board five nautical miles off the port of Tyre. Medium-weapons fire was directed at the boat, but no one was hurt. The boat was seized and towed out to sea to a distance of 10 nautical miles off Kharab-Tyre. At 0645 hours it was released and headed for Tyre. At 1000 hours the tugboat reached the port of Tyre with all crew members on board.

11 November 2000

Between 1845 and 2115 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Shab`a farmlands at moderate altitude.

At 1900 hours Israeli forces strafed the area around their position at Ruwaysat al-Summaqah with medium-weapons fire.

12 November 2000

Between 0850 and 1000 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the Western Bekaa, the North, Mount Lebanon, the South and offshore areas at very high altitudes, and air-raid warning sirens were set off at the Qulay`at air base.

Between 1215 and 1445 hours Israeli forces in position at Summaqiyah hill fired several bursts of light-weapons fire into the air when a number of citizens tried to approach the Hasan gate (in the Shab`a farmlands). No one was hurt.

Between 1720 and 1920 hours Israeli helicopters overflew the Shab`a farmlands and Udaysah, Markaba, Marj and Kafr Killa at very high altitudes, thus violating Lebanese airspace. They then left in the direction of the occupied territories.

At 1845 hours the positions of the Israeli enemy opposite the Fatimah gate (Kafr Killa) directed several bursts of fire at a vehicle containing four persons from Hula. The rear window of the vehicle was hit, but no one was hurt.

13 November 2000

Israeli helicopters overflew the South.

14 November 2000

Between 1035 and 1110 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South and the Western Bekaa at very high altitudes, breaking the sound barrier in the South and releasing heat balloons over Hasbayya.

Between 1215 and 1250 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South, the North and Mount Lebanon at very high altitudes, breaking the sound barrier. Fraternal forces stationed at the Qulay`at air base sounded the warning siren.

15 November 2000

At 1600 hours Israeli forces directed several rounds of light automatic-weapons fire from their position on Misgav Am hill at a certain Abbas Sulayman, whose mother is a native and resident of Kafr Killa, while he was unloading stones and rubble at a point opposite the said hill on the Udaysah main road, which runs parallel to the boundary fence. He was hit by one round in the left shoulder and was taken to Marj Uyun hospital where he underwent a surgical procedure.

Between 2100 and 2200 hours Israeli forces launched 10 illumination flares over the sea along the Lebanon-Israel boundary off Ra's al-Naqurah from their positions inside the occupied territories.

16 November 2000

Between 1545 and 1650 hours three Israeli helicopters flew over the Summaqah outpost.

At intervals between 1645 and 2115 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Nabatiyah and Tyre areas at very high altitude.

17 November 2000

Between 1140 and 1145 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the Tibnin area at very high altitudes.

19 November 2000

At 1020 hours Israeli forces strafed the area round their position at Summaqiyah hill with medium-weapons fire. Between 1130 and 1430 hours Israeli warplanes overflew all parts of Lebanon breaking the sound barrier.

Between 1300 and 1330 hours Israeli forces fired several rounds of light automatic-weapons fire at the area around the tomb of Shaykh Abbad. One Lebanese citizen, a native and resident of Hula, was hit in the right foot by bullet fragments and was taken to hospital for medical attention.

20 November 2000

At 0920 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the Tyre area.

Between 1100 and 1125 hours Israeli warplanes overflew all parts of Lebanon at very high altitudes, breaking the sound barrier.

21 November 2000

Between 0830 and 1045 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Nabatiyah and Marj Uyun areas at very high altitude.

At 1930 hours an Israeli gunboat fired several bursts of medium-machine-gun fire and launched a number of illumination flares over the sea inside Israeli territorial waters off Ra's al-Naqurah.

Between 1930 and 2030 hours two Israeli helicopters flew over Summaqah hill, Ruwaysat al-Alam and the occupied Shab`a farmlands before leaving in the direction of the occupied territories.

At 2315 hours an Israeli gunboat inside Israeli territorial waters off Ra's al-Naqurah directed several bursts of medium-weapons fire towards fishing boats inside Lebanese territorial waters.

22 November 2000

Between 0915 and 1040 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South and Mount Lebanon at very high altitudes.

Between 1400 and 1500 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South, the North and Mount Lebanon at very high altitudes.

At 1220 hours an Israeli soldier fired two light-weapons rounds into the air over a number of citizens on the Lebanese side of the Fatimah gate. No one was hurt.

At 2145 hours Israeli forces launched five illumination flares over the Lebanon-Israel boundary area south of Yarun from inside the occupied territories.

Between 2300 and 2330 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South, the North and Mount Lebanon at very high altitudes.

23 November 2000

Between 0020 and 0130 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South, the North, the Western Bekaa and Mount Lebanon at various altitudes.

At intervals between 1030 and 1430 hours an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Tyre area and the Shab`a farmlands at very high altitudes.

24 November 2000

At 1655 hours sounds of several explosions and bursts of medium-weapons fire were heard coming from the vicinity of Ramta hill in the occupied Shab`a farmlands.

Between 2050 and 2110 hours Israeli forces launched several illumination flares over the area around their position at Ruwaysat al-Alam in the occupied Shab`a farmlands and strafed the same area with medium-weapons fire.

25 November 2000

Between 1140 and 1250 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South at very high altitudes.

At 2050 hours an Israeli gunboat inside Israeli territorial waters off Ra's al-Naqurah launched an illumination flare over the sea. At 2305 hours an Israeli gunboat in the same location launched two illumination flares over the sea.

26 November 2000

At 0645 hours Israeli forces directed several bursts of 12.7-mm medium-machine-gun fire and fired a number of 155-mm artillery shells and 81-mm mortar rounds at outlying areas of Shab`a, Kafr Shuba, Kafr Hamam and Hilta, inside Lebanese territory, from their outpost at Summaqah and from Ramta hill in the occupied Shab`a farmlands as well as from inside the occupied territories. Three Israeli helicopters, some warplanes and an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft also overflew the occupied Shab`a farmlands at various altitudes.

At 0755 and 0824 hours Israeli warplanes attacked the Riba` al-Tibn area (outside Kafr Shuba) and the Ruwaysat al-Luwayzah area (south-west of Shab`a), firing three air-to-surface missiles. A number of goats were killed.

At 0800 hours a number of Israeli shells fired by a tank positioned at Birkat al-Naqqar in the occupied Shab`a farmlands impacted near the main road between Shuba and Shab`a in Hasbayya district.

At 1035 hours an Israeli helicopter fired two rockets at Mazra`at Bastarah in a recently liberated outlying area of Kafr Shuba. At 1045 hours the Israeli bombardment extended to Kafr Shuba. It was heavily shelled with black-smoke projectiles, giving rise to fears of an incursion.

Between 1015 and 1040 hours Israeli forces fired several 155-mm artillery shells and smoke projectiles at outlying areas of Hilta and Majidiyah inside Lebanese territory from their outposts in the occupied Shab`a farmlands. At 1100 hours the shelling resumed, causing a woodland fire in an outlying area of Kafr Shuba.

At 2100 hours an Israeli gunboat inside Israeli territorial waters off Ra's al-Naqurah launched an illumination flare over the area.

27 November 2000

Between 1055 and 1230 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South and Mount Lebanon at very high altitudes.

At 2100 hours Israeli forces in the occupied territories launched two illumination flares over the Lebanon-Palestine border opposite Alma al-Sha`b.

Between 2215 hours and 0025 hours on 28 November an Israeli reconnaissance aircraft overflew the Shab`a farmlands at very high altitude.

28 November 2000

Between 0800 and 0810 hours Israeli forces strafed the area around their position at Ruwaysat al-Summaqah in the occupied Shab`a farmlands with medium-weapons fire.

Between 1032 and 1125 hours Israeli warplanes overflew all parts of Lebanon at very high altitudes.

Between 1515 and 1620 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the Bint Jubayl area at very high altitudes.

29 November 2000

At 1605 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the Tyre area at very high altitudes.

30 November 2000

Between 1210 and 1255 hours Israeli warplanes overflew the South, Mount Lebanon and the North at very high altitudes.

Like previous Israeli violations, this latest series is in flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and of Lebanon's sovereignty and poses a threat to stability in the region.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sélim **Tadmoury**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative